

**DECISION RECORD AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**for**  
**Earth Center Adventures**

**I. Decision:**

It is my decision to authorize a special recreation permit to Earth Center Adventures for a period of five years, for commercial recreation operations on BLM public land. The standard stipulations for special recreation permits are attached to the Decision Record and the authorizing permit. Mitigation measures identified for the Proposed Action in the environmental consequences section of the attached environmental assessment have been formulated into stipulations.

**II. Rationale for the Decision:**

The decision to allow the Proposed Action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

The analysis addresses the issues resulting from the Proposed Action. The glacier landing tours will help meet demand from the public for this type of service and increase the economic base of the area. The limits placed on the operation in the form of stipulations will minimize impacts to residents, recreationists and wildlife. The decision considers off-site effects (enroute) on residents, recreationists and wildlife. It is possible to influence enroute actions by requiring environmentally responsible conduct as a condition of landing on public land.

No land use plan exists for this area. However, the attached environmental analysis assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action and provides a basis for a decision on the proposal {43 CFR 1610.8(b)(1)}.

**III. Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI):**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

**IV. ANILCA Section 810 (a) Summary:**

The Proposed Action will not restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources and no limitation on harvester access to subsistence species will result from the Proposed Action. Because these lands are State selected, they may no longer fall under the Federal Subsistence Board, Federal Subsistence Regulations or ANILCA Section 810.

**V. Compliance and Monitoring:**

Monitoring will be conducted as part of the on-going monitoring under the Temsco Helicopter and Mountain Flying Service permits.

/s/ Nick Douglas  
Anchorage Field Manager

July 20,2000  
Date

2 Attachments

- 1 - AK-040-EA00-019 (10 pp.)
- 2 - Stipulations (2 pp.)

**Stipulations  
For  
Earth Center Adventures**

For all mitigation measures, it is recognized that exceptions may be made for all aircraft safety. Aircraft and passenger safety will take precedent over these mitigation measures.

1. All authorized operations will assure that operators meet FAA requirements to achieve safe air operations (routing, airspace separation and coordination with other operators).
2. All authorized operators will be required to submit and abide by a Safety and Operating Plan which will be approved by the BLM and will be a part of the Special Recreation Use Permit. The FAA will review these submissions.
3. All operations will maintain a 1,500 foot clearance of key mountain goat areas, mountain goats, sensitive bird nesting sites, brown and black bears, wolves, moose, sea lions, and other marine mammals. Steepness (degree in slope) and roughness (outcrops and spur ridges) affect the ratio of elevation to horizontal distance significantly. Attempts should be made to maximize distance between ground and habitats or animals wherever possible. Flight routes over near level terrain will maintain a minimum of 1,500 feet above ground level and at least 1,500 feet horizontal distance from wildlife and wildlife habitat features described above. Pilots are not expected to compromise safety when weather conditions indicate the 1,500 foot minimum cannot be met.
4. Flight paths will avoid known mountain goat kidding areas from May 15 through June 15. If goats are observed on rock islands, landing areas must be located a minimum of one mile from the observed goat activity.
5. All authorized operations will adhere to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommendations regarding eagle nests. Operators will be furnished with maps which show locations to be avoided during the nesting season.
  - a. Maintain established travel routes, but avoid any eagle nest by at least 1/4 mile (1,320 feet).
  - b. Aircraft must avoid circling near any eagle nest.
  - c. Report to USFWS office and the BLM eagle nests found that are not indicated on maps provided.

**Stipulations (Cont'd.)  
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6. Do not circle or harass wildlife in any way. This refers particularly to mountain goats, wolves, bears, eagles, sea lions, and other marine mammals, but includes all wildlife species. Flight paths should be altered to avoid flying over rock islands with observed goat activity.
7. All operations will be requested to report observations, numbers, classification, and behavior by date, time, observer (pilot), location (map) of mountain goats, brown and black bear, moose, wolf, black tail deer, and wolverines, to the BLM by November 1 of the operating year. It is understood that can only be done secondary to safety during the flight and the purpose of the tour. BLM will provide training and data sheets as requested.